DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 089 562 HE 005 268

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TITLE Women and the Psychology of Management.
PUB DATE Dec 73
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at a conference on "Women and the Management of Postsecondary Institutions" (Syracuse, New York, December, 1973)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Discriminatory Attitudes (Social); *Educational Administration; *Females; *Higher Education; Leadership Styles; *Management; Managerial Occupations; Psychological Characteristics; Self Concept; Sex Discrimination

ABSTRACT

Attitudes of others toward women in management and the attitudes of women managers themselves are discussed. Research concludes: (1) Employers may be reluctant to place women in managerial positions, but internal constraints on women such as lack of motivation, fear of success or possession of personality characteristics incompatible with the assumption of managerial positions may limit access. (2) Accessibility is restricted by type of industry, type of job in industry, and attitudes of management towards women. (3) In elementary and secondary schools, the only factor having any significance for hiring was sex. (4) Accessibility to positions of leadership may be further limited by lack of appropriate role models or lack of identification with available role models. (5) Accessibility may be limited by self-defeating attitudes of women. (MJM)

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ED 089562

Women and the Psychology of Management[1]

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Any adequate assessment of women in management must eventually deal with both attitudinal and behavioral considerations. Attitudes of others towards women in management and the attitudes of women managers themselves are two sides of the same question. The influence of these attitudes and their interaction will, in turn, help determine behaviors of women managers and those managed.

The need for addressing the topic of women in management is readily apparent. In a time when women are seeking recognition of abilities, facts are needed. Women may or may not differ from men in their managerial skills. If data are not collected with regard to such possible differences, placement and utilization of women in management may occur in the most convenient or pragmatic way, simply to meet governmental regulations, to appease vocal groups of women, or on the basis of emotional conviction.

The identification of several questions will assist in considering the topic. First, a question to which most attention has been given, to what extent are managerial positions available to women? Limitations on availability will not only be meaningful in pointing out difficulties for aspiring women but will have profound effects on answers to other questions which may be raised since only a very limited group of successful women will be available for study. These women may not be typical of all potential women managers. A second question is, what are the personal characteristics valued in leader-managers and to what extent are these characteristics possessed by women as compared with men? Third, do goals and styles of leadership differ for women and men managers? Fourth,

[1]Based on a talk given at a conference on "Women and the Management of Post-secondary Institutions" at Syracuse, New York, December, 1973.

how effective are women as managers? Do they differ as a sex from men, or are differences, to the extent that they are found, merely attributable to individual differences between people regardless of sex?

In considering the first question posed, that of accessibility of managerial positions to women, two frameworks must be considered, the external and the internal. Not only may employers be reluctant to place women in managerial positions, but internal constraints on women such as lack of motivation, fear of success, or possession of personality characteristics incompatible with the assumption of managerial positions may limit access.

That external discrimination has occurred is overwhelmingly evident. Data indicate that accessibility is restricted by type of industry, type of job within industry, and attitudes of management towards women. Hiring of women managers has been almost exclusively in apparel manufacturing, retail trade, hotels, hospitals, banking, insurance, education, transportation, and utilities. Even within these organizations, women are generally placed in management jobs where expertise is the basis of authority rather than the authority of the position itself within the organizational structure.

Even in occupations where management positions have been open to women, sex discrimination is manifest. Taylor (1973) in a study of administrative selection in elementary and secondary schools has found that the only factor having any significance for hiring was sex. Age, type of position, length of experience, size of school, district of background had no valid correlation with the hiring process. This was true, Taylor points out, despite research on educational administrators which has shown women principals outscoring men in their ability to work with teachers and outsiders, their concern with objectives, their

knowledge of teaching methods and techniques, and their ability to gain positive reactions from teachers and superiors.

To further demonstrate the discrimination which has occurred in educational management, according to data collected in congressional hearings (1973) 85% of the teachers in elementary schools are female, but only 21% of the elementary school principals and only 3% of the high school principals. At the college level, only 1% of the college presidents are women, most of these being in Catholic women's colleges. Oltman (1971) found that 21% of the institutions of higher education had no women trustees. The percentage was even lower for schools greater than 10,000.

Accessibility to positions of leadership may be further limited by lack of appropriate role models or lack of identification with available role models. There are obviously many fewer successful women managers than men available as models to women considering professional careers. Not only is sheer number of women in management important in developing expectancies of appropriateness of career choices and probabilities of success in women, but to the extent that specific skills are required by women to succeed, the opportunities to observe and learn these skills is very limited.

Available male models may differ markedly in their treatment of females, spending less time with them in informal situations, sharing fewer perceptions, and recommending them for jobs or promotions less often.

In addition to external restrictions to obtaining managerial positions, accessibility may be limited by self-defeating attitudes of women. The concept of fear of success advanced by Horner has been much cited. Some recent research (Tresemer, 1974) suggests that Horner's conclusions must be viewed with caution and that additional research does not support the broad generalization that women

are more fearful of success in all situations than men.

A self-limiting factor to women need not be as apparent or intense as denoted by the term "fear" however. Rather sex-role stereotypes may operate to limit such entry. A consideration of this possibility is related to the second question posed in this paper, what are personal characteristics valued in leaders and do the sexes differ in these characteristics?

A group of investigators (Broverman, 1972) has described the pervasiveness of sex-role stereotypes which are shared by both sexes. Women, as well as men perceive women as less competent, less independent, less objective, and less logical than men, while both sexes view men as lacking interpersonal sensitivity, warmth, and expressiveness in comparison to women. Of greater significance is that "masculine traits" are judged to be more desirable, not only by men, but by women as well. The magnitude of the effect of growing up with these pervasive cultural sterotypes upon women's self-esteem can only be estimated. The potential handicap created for a woman as she acts in any adult role must be recognized and dealt with. Moreover, such sterotypes are of particular importance as women approach and assume leadership roles.

Sex-linked sterotypes have also been demonstrated to relate specifically to personal characteristics valued in leaders. In a questionnaire study of women in management positions and their superiors, Douglas Basil, Management Professor at the University of Southern California, (1972), asked both these groups to list personal characteristics valued in leaders. Both men and women essentially agreed on the important traits for leadership. However, respondents were further asked which of these attributes are possessed by women. Of the eight characteristics judged to be essential for higher management four were judged by both sexes to be characteristic of women. These four interestingly enough, held ranks 5 through 8 of those traits considered essential. Qualities holding

the top four ranks were not judged to be characteristic of women. A ninth ranking characteristic, "attention to detail" was judged valuable in leaders, but not essential for top management. It was agreed by both sexes that women possess this characteristic. A group of college students were given the same questions regarding personal characteristics essential for leadership and further asked the extent to which men and women possessed these traits. The results were the same as for the males and females in the principal study.

Schein (1973) in a recently conducted study among middle managers in nine insurance companies found that characteristics attributed to adult men by these managers correlated positively with attributes viewed as characteristic of successful middle managers. However, characteristics and temperament of adult women correlated negatively with those of successful managers. Still other studies have found differences in perceptions of the sexes as their persoral characteristics relate to leadership. These findings can be summarized as attributing to men greater deliberative and risk-taking qualities than to women while women are viewed as having greater strength in personal attractiveness and warmth.

Implications of all these findings are provocative. Men in management positions, men managers with females reporting to them, students without managerial experience, and even women managers all appear to concur in their judgements of leader characteristics and the sex-linking of these characteristics. One might argue that these opinions are so universally held because they reflect reality. However, the criterion for reality in this case must include situational behavior. Study of situational behavior will be difficult. Attitudes and expectancies regarding sex will not only influence behavior of those studied but may influence investigators conducting that study. Criteria for success and

failure are often intrinsically tied to judgements which are culturally determined. Even greater objectivity may be needed in designing and conducting studies investigating sex as a performance variable than other variables related to performance.

The remaining questions initially posed by this paper having to do with goals, styles of leadership, and effectiveness of women in management have not been answered. Few data are available to provide these answers. Some have assumed that women will differ in management skills and styles and proposed that training sessions take these differences into account. Loring (1972) has described types of managerial environments which will facilitate movement of women into managerial roles. If, in fact, a correlation does exist between managerial environment and ease of access to managerial positions by women, it can be hypothesized that women emerging from these environments will be likely to adopt that managerial style. Clearly many hypotheses are possible and need investigating. Are women selected for particular management positions because their personal characteristics are consistent with cultural stereotypes and judgements of attributes needed in that particular position? Will women who are viewed as personally warm, supportive and attractive be selected rather than women who are deliberative, manipulative risk-takers? Will men also be selected on the basis of stereotypes? Will those who are empathetic and sensitive be passed over for managerial positions? How effective is any managerial style regardless of sex? Does sex interact with particular styles to produce better or worse results? We are overdue in providing answers to some of these questions.

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